

INTRODUCTION

One of the major planning principles established in the 1995 Campus Master Plan is that the university will plan first for open spaces, and buildings and other facilities will reinforce and define the open space system. This principle is intended to remind all people making campus planning and architectural design decisions that they are creating components of a much larger entity. It is easy to focus on immediate needs served by an individual project and overlook the role that each project plays in creating the academic environment of the university. The campus as a whole must be strengthened and enhanced by each new project. This concept of improving the campus fabric of buildings and open spaces is called “Civic Structure.”

The Civic Structure policy relates directly to the 2000 Academic Plan goal of “enhancing the quality of the teaching and learning environment.” World-class universities create an environment that supports the interactions essential in the atmosphere of an academic community. Such universities are characterized by a network of open spaces and outdoor rooms that fulfill a vital civic role as meeting places where ideas can be exchanged and new connections made.

In October 1996, the Coordinating Council adopted a policy to fund the implementation of Civic Structure on campus. The policy requires that two percent of the construction cost be reserved for civic structure improvements on each major construction project. This money is calculated as part of the initial project budget, is included in all capital or other funding requests, and is a line item on the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

Civic Structure funds must be used for site or landscape improvements that implement the University Master Plan or one of its major goals. These improvements must be above and beyond what is required to construct the building, and must be in a location which is accessible by the public at all times.

The university’s decision to fund Civic Structure improvements through individual projects represents an understanding of the relationship among the University Master Plan, the University Academic Plan, and a commitment to create a campus for a “world-class university”—a campus that “enhances the quality of the teaching and learning environment.”

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is Civic Structure?

Civic structure is defined in the 1995 University Master Plan as “the framework of major roads, pedestrian and bicycle routes, open space corridors, and public spaces.”

2. Are there other names or terms for Civic Structure?

The original policy adopted by the Coordinating Council referred to the concept as “Community Structure,” and some budget planning documents and MoU templates still refer to the line item as “Master Plan Implementation.” “Civic Structure” is the preferred term because it relates directly to the principle described in the University Master Plan.

3. What is the Civic Structure policy?

On each major construction project, two percent of the construction costs are to be reserved for civic structure improvements.

4. How and when is Civic Structure funding calculated?

The amount of Civic Structure funding is calculated during the development of the initial project budget and is included in all capital or other funding requests. The percentage is calculated on the estimated construction cost at the time the request is prepared.

5. Where does the Civic Structure funding come from (and does it reduce funding for program space)?

Civic Structure funding is part of the total project cost. This money is in addition to the estimated cost to construct a building of the size, type, and quality that has been requested. The estimated construction cost of the building includes the cost of basic site and utility work required to construct the building. Civic Structure money is not taken out of the building construction budget but rather added to the construction cost.

6. Is Civic Structure funding required for all projects?

Civic Structure funding is required for all university projects involving new construction, renovations, or additions, regardless of source of funds with a few exceptions:

- The construction cost is under \$1.5 million
- The project includes interior renovations only and does not impact significant public spaces with a potential connection to exterior space, such as lobbies, entries, or public classrooms.

7. What are the guidelines for the use of Civic Structure funds?

The intent of the Civic Structure funding is that the money be spent for site or landscape improvements that implement the University Master Plan or one of its major goals.

Generally, the improvements should be in proximity to the project site and should serve to connect the project site to the larger fabric of campus as envisioned in the Master Plan.

Some other requirements for the expenditure of Civic Structure funds include:

- The improvements must be above and beyond what is normally required to construct the building.

- The improvements must be in a location that is accessible by the public at all times.

8. What type of site improvements are “normally required to construct a building” and thus not eligible for expenditure of Civic Structure funds?

Some examples of typical site improvements that would be required to construct a building and thus are not eligible for expenditure of Civic Structure funds include:

- Earthwork required to construct foundations and basements.
- Grading required to bring the soil to an appropriate level in relation to the entry floor.
- “Finishing” the soil with grass seed or other plant material.
- Providing paths to all operable doors that meet minimum university standards (typically concrete of a specified strength and thickness).
- Providing an accessible entry or entries to the building (typically a hard surface with specified slope and/or handrails).
- Providing adequate service to the building and screening service areas (includes deliveries, trash pick-up, etc.).
- Extending, moving, modifying, or connecting utilities, including earthwork and repair of any disturbed surface (seeding, repairing walks and drives).
- Repairing or restoring to its former condition the site or adjacent areas that have been used as construction staging areas.
- Roads and drives to provide required access to the structure for users, visitors, safety, and maintenance personnel.
- Parking and drop-off areas required for the function of the building.

9. What are some examples of improvements for which Civic Structure funds may be spent?

Some examples of site improvements for which Civic Structure funds may be used include:

- Upgrading materials and planting in public areas, at building entrances, or on walks leading to the building, particularly if these improve or create new connections to the rest of campus. If these elements are normally required to construct and occupy the building, then only the difference in cost between the minimum requirement and the upgraded materials or planting may be counted.
- Improving, upgrading or creating spaces in the green reserve (Vol. II: Long Range Concept Plan, Figure II-7).
- Creating, improving, or upgrading pedestrian connections from the building precinct to other precincts on campus.
- Creating a memorable outdoor space, such as a quadrangle, urban courtyard, or pedestrian promenade as described in Volume 8: Landscape Master Plan, provided that such space is accessible to the public at all times.
- Streetscape or parkway improvements as described in Volume 8: Landscape Master Plan.

- Creating or enhancing an entrance or gateway to the university.
- Costs to improve beyond existing condition an area used for construction staging, but only the difference between restoring the area to the existing condition before construction and restoring it to an improved quality.

The entire cost of creating or improving public elements or spaces that are not normally required to construct and occupy the building may be funded by Civic Structure funds. As an example, if a new space (quadrangle, urban courtyard, or pedestrian promenade) is created, Civic Structure funds may be spent for grading, moving utilities, paving, landscaping, and site furnishings that are required to create the new space.

10. Who decides how Civic Structure funds will be used on a given project?

In some cases where the project is located on a prominent site or adjacent to a key campus open space, the Campus Planner, in consultation with the University Landscape Architect and University Architect, will predetermine where the Civic Structure money should be spent. In most cases, the decision is a result of discussions with the planning team, in consultation with the Campus Planner, early in the design phase. At the beginning of the design process, the Campus Planner will provide an analysis of Master Plan guidelines for the building site and any Master Plan elements or spaces located at or near the project site that would be eligible for expenditure of Civic Structure funds. In some cases, Civic Structure funding will not be adequate to accomplish all of the possible Master Plan implementation projects, and the team will have to decide where to spend the funds, with guidance from the Campus Planner. As the project evolves through the various design phases, the team may decide to modify or change how the Civic Structure money is to be spent. This will require the guidance and approval of the Campus Planner.

11. How is the Civic Structure policy enforced?

The Campus Planner will attend regular design meetings to help guide decisions about how Civic Structure funds are to be spent. The Campus Planner also will review the documents at each stage of design to determine if the agreed upon scope and quality of the Civic Structure elements are present in the documents. In addition, the Campus Planner will request an itemized accounting of the funds to be spent on Civic Structure improvements. The Planner will review the cost estimates to determine if the agreed upon civic structure amount is being spent on eligible items. The Campus Planner will consult with and may enlist the assistance of the University Architect and University Landscape Architect during this process.

12. What happens if the project budget changes?

If the construction cost of the project changes, the Civic Structure fee changes accordingly. If funds are added for construction of the project anytime up to bid day, the Civic Structure

increases by two percent of the additional funds. If construction funds for the project decrease, then the Civic Structure funds decrease by two percent of the decreased funds.

13. Are the projects at regional campuses required to set aside money for Civic Structure?

The policy was originally intended for the Columbus campus. Regional campuses were not included in the original policy because their capital projects have been funded through a separate process, and they did not have master plans at the time of implementation. Integrating the funding process for the regional campuses with the process for the Columbus campus is under review. The requirement for Civic Structure, among other requirements, may be added to regional campus projects in the future. In addition, the regional campuses have completed master plans. In the interim, it is highly recommended, although not yet required, that budgets for regional campus projects include the Civic Structure line item to begin implementing their respective master plans.